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# DIALOGUE

Between one who calls himself

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A CHURCHMAN,

And one who is called

A METHODIST.

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*Thus saith the Lord, Ask for the OLD PATHS, the good Way,  
and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your Souls, Jer. vi. 16.  
Be not carried about with every Wind of Doctrine. Eph. iv. 14.*

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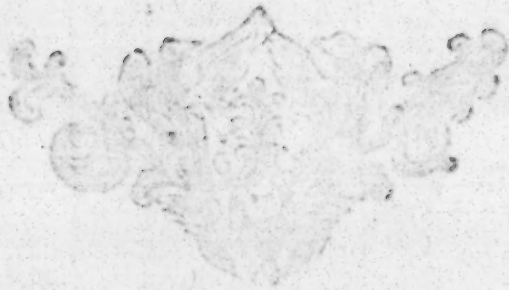
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## DIALOGUE, &c.

*Church-Man.* **M**Y old friend, I am glad to see you well; but am sorry to hear of your late conduct.

*Methodist.* I am concerned, that while my health affords you pleasure, my conduct should give you pain. But pray what have I done to occasion your sorrow for me?

*C.* Done! Why you have left the good old way, changed your religion, forsook your church, to run after a set of mad enthusiastic preachers. I am really surprized at you. Were you a fool, you are to be pitied; but in a man of your sense, such conduct deserves the severest censure.

*M.* Pray do not condemn me unheard, do not pass sentence on me before you suffer me to plead for myself, and try at least to vindicate my conduct.

*C.* Psha! prithee let me hear none of your stuff, your cant, your nonsense. Monstrous! for a man to appear in a fool's cap and a mad man's coat, make himself ridiculous to all the world, and then to talk of pleading for himself and vindicating his conduct. It is intolerable, I cannot bear to hear it.

*M.* Pardon me, my good Sir, the fault is not in my dress, but in your judgment. Forgive me when I say, it is you that *think* I appear in such a ridiculous garb, not that I *really* have put it on. I doubt not but if you would be pleased coolly to hear me a few moments, that I can acquit myself of the imputation of folly and the charge of madness.

*C.* Pray answer me one short and plain question, Have you not left your church?

*M.* I honestly and faithfully reply in the negative.

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*C.* No!

C. No! I am sure you used constantly to come to our parish church, and now I seldom or ever see you there. Pray what is the reason of this?

M. Why, really there is such a change, such an alteration—such—

C. Change! alteration! What do you talk of? I am sure all things continue just as they were in the church ever since I can remember; the communion-table stands where it did, neither the desk nor the pulpit is removed, the prayers are neither changed nor altered, and our parson preaches as he always used to do; what then can you mean by change and alteration?

M. Dear Sir! I had no view to any of these things; I was going to observe, there is such a change in my judgment of myself, such an alteration in my view of those things which are of the utmost consequence, yea, of eternal importance, that I am thoroughly persuaded, did you see yourself, and the truths of religion in the same light I now see them, you would act as I do.

C. What! run away from the church? forsake the good old way to find new paths?

M. No, Sir, such is not my conduct. I desire to obey the word of the LORD by his prophet: “Thus saith the LORD, Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the OLD PATHS, where is the good way, and walk therein; and ye shall find rest for your souls,” *Jer. vi. 16.* Therefore I cleave in judgment, in heart and affection, to the ancient doctrines contained in the established articles of our church of *England*: doctrines which our venerable compilers lived comfortably in the belief of, and died joyfully in the experience of; doctrines upon which I fix my faith, from which I derive my hope, and upon the truths of which I dare venture the salvation of my soul. For they are drawn from the eternal truths of GOD’S word, and they set forth to us, no other name wherein we sinners can trust, no other

other way wherein we sinners can possibly be saved, but in and through the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the life and death of the Son of GOD ONLY.

C. Very well ; then why won't you come to church to hear these doctrines preached ?

M. I wish I could. I am sure it would be to the joy, of my heart, and to the rejoicing of my soul.

C. Nay, if you do not come to church, certainly you cannot hear them, and so you deprive your heart of joy and your soul of rejoicing.

M. Truly, if I do come to church, I cannot hear those truths ; it is the want of this that fills my mind with grief, and sends me away with sorrow of heart.

C. Not hear those truths at church ! not at our church ! why, what then do they preach there ?

M. Truly what I was always very well pleased to hear before I KNEW MYSELF.

C. Knew yourself ! why, what do you know more of yourself *now* than what you always knew ?

M. Ah Sir ! we are all so wicked, that it is natural to us all, as the psalmist says, ‘ To flatter ourselves in our “own eyes, till our iniquity is found to be hateful,” *Psalms xxxvi. 2.* This I have done all my life-time, through the darkness of my understanding and the deceitfulness of my heart ; but the LORD by his word and SPIRIT has been pleased to chase away the darkness of the former, and to remove the veil of deceit from off the latter ; so that I now know myself, in some measure, even as I am also known, know myself as a condemned criminal under sentence of the law of GOD to eternal death ; and just as incapable as a condemned malefactor to do any thing to reverse my sentence, and to procure the favour of GOD, and the salvation of my soul.

C. Good GOD ! the man is certainly in despair. Why, you wicked wretch, you might well indeed leave our church after you have gone such abominable lengths

in sin and wickedness! What will become of you? LORD have mercy upon you!

*M.* Amen. Yes, Sir, I own I am in such a kind of despair, which I would to GOD, if it pleased him, to bring you also into.

*C.* I beg you would keep your prayers to yourself. I want none of such. Despair, quoth he!

*M.* Suffer me to explain myself. Far be it from my heart to wish any evil to my friend. Yet, believe me, my dear Sir, but why do I say believe *me*? rather believe GOD in what he hath declared in his word concerning yourself, me, and the whole race of mankind: "All have sinned; all are under condemnation;" *Rom.* iii. 23. the law of GOD pronounces, "Cursed is every one." *Gal.* iii. 16. You, even you are, as well as I, by nature, a child of wrath, by practice a sinner, and therefore condemned, under the sentence of death, as verily and as truly, by the law of GOD, as ever a malefactor was condemned by the law of the land, who is chained in *Newgate*, or with a halter about his neck is going to execution.

*C.* I am not much obliged to you for your compliment. Your conversation I don't like at all; and was it not in hopes of rallying you out of these odd whims in your head, I would leave you instantly.

*M.* I meant not in the least to offend you. In this respect there is the greatest love, the sincerest friendship, where there is the plainest speech. But be assured these truths concerning my own state have entered too deep into my heart ever to be rallied out of my head; and as to the despair I wished you to be in, and which I find myself the subject of, it is this: I totally, I utterly despair in myself, of ever doing any thing whereby I can deliver myself from the curse of the law and the wrath of GOD. And until this is really the case, the hope of you, and of every sinner in the world, is only the child of presumption begot by false confidence.

*C.* Pray

*C.* Pray, then, what do you think will become of you?

*M.* I must die in my sins, rise in my sins, stand at the tremendous bar of judgment in my sins, and be eternally doomed to destruction for my sins, for any thing I can do to save myself,

*C.* This is strange talk. I never in my life heard such harsh preaching at our church. Can't do any thing to save ourselves! What do you think we go to church for then?

*M.* Why, I will tell you one thing we go to church for, and it is one of the very first things we do there; we publicly open our mouths in our confession to Almighty God, 'That we are miserable offenders, that there is no health in us.' Now what can miserable offenders who have no health, and consequently no strength in themselves, do to save themselves?

*C.* What then must we lie down and despair and perish in our sins?

*M.* Yes: I assert it again, for any thing we can do to save ourselves.

*C.* Fine doctrine truly! I never can believe this.

*M.* Nor is it in my power to make you. But whether you believe it or not, it is equally true. The word of God declares it, the coming of the Son of God to save those who were lost proves it; the church of CHRIST in all ages has acknowledged it, and I am this day a living witness of the experience of it. And you, even you have, I suppose, a thousand times over confessed thus much with your lips, and yet now you say you cannot believe it.

*C.* Believe it! Why I should tremble and be frightened to death, if I believed what you say, that I am so very wicked that I have destroyed my own soul, and yet that I am so very helpless too that I can do nothing to save myself. What a miserable state is this to be in!

*M.* Truly it is; and this is the very state and condition of your soul; and not only of yours, but also of the whole

whole

Pray

whole race of mankind; though you think yourself safe, because you do not see, do not believe your misery, nor are sensible of your danger. And this is the very worst, the most dangerous symptom that attends you; so that you are, as I said just now, not only like a condemned malefactor in *Newgate*, but also like one who is so stupid, thoughtless, and unaffected about his state, that he is at no pains to use any means to try to get a reprieve for his life.

*C.* I really believe you want to make me miserable.

*M.* Indeed I do not. You are already made miserable by sin, you have confessed it, and I only wish you to be made sensible of it in your heart and conscience.

*C.* What good would that do you? What advantage would that be to me?

*M.* Why, first, it would prevent you from drawing nigh to God any more with your mouth, when your heart is far from him; from confessing with your lips what you do not believe, are not convinced of in your heart. 2. It would prevent your living in ease and quiet, content with the form of godliness, without the power of it; and so you could not rest in a false unscriptural hope and vain confidence. 3. It would excite earnest prayer in your soul for mercy, and put you upon solicitous enquiry after the hope of the gospel and the salvation of Jesus therein revealed.

*C.* You make christianity a most uncomfortable system indeed; and if all christians believed as you do, they must be of all men most miserable.

*M.* No; not so truly. Christianity of all others is the most comfortable religion. Christians of all men in the world are the most happy; and yet all real christians do believe and confess of themselves as I do. For remember, dear Sir, the christian religion finds us in a sinful, condemned, hopeless, and helpless state. Yet it is divinely calculated to suit our wretched state, to bring relief to our minds, hope to our hearts, and joy to our spirits. It  
salutes

salutes us with glad tidings—it is a declaration of grace—a proclamation of mercy—a report of a reprieve to condemned sinners—sinners of all ranks, states, and conditions: Yea the very worst, the vilest, and the chiefest of sinners. And the author of our religion, JESUS CHRST, is the friend, the most precious friend of sinners. They who have repented, turned to him and embraced him by faith, have found him so in all ages; and he is the same to-day as he was yester day, and will continue so for ever. So that the religion of the gospel is the religion of sinners.

*C.* So then you would have our ministers consider themselves as called to preach to a company of condemned malefactors, who can do nothing to save themselves, but must be wholly indebted to JESUS CHRIST for salvation.

*M.* Why, truly, this is the case; and if they really did preach according to the truths of GOD's word, agreeable to the articles of our church, and suitable to their own confession in the liturgy of our church, they would indeed consider themselves addressing a congregation who had just before joined with themselves in supplicating GOD the Father, GOD the Son, and GOD the Holy Ghost, 'to have mercy upon us MISERABLE SINNERS.' And was this the case, we should no more hear such fulsome flattery paid to our sinful natures; we should hear no encomiums on the dignity of our fallen nature, nor be exhorted to put any confidence in our moral rectitude, &c. No, the sinner would be laid low, that the Saviour might be exalted; the creature debased, that the Redeemer might be honoured; then would that name, which is above every name, the precious name of JESUS, be proclaimed with joy; his complete work and finished salvation sounded forth, as the glory of our pulpits and the joy of the people; then would they be taught with blessed *Paul* to say, "GOD forbid that we should glory in any thing, save only in the cross  
" of

“ of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.” We rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the flesh. Then—

C. Why, you hold out most powerfully; methinks you are commenced preacher already.

M. O Sir! when JESUS is the theme, and his glorious salvation the subject, here to be cool is criminal. For what poor sinner, who is sensible of his miserable, lost, and undone state, and knows that he is indebted, wholly indebted, to the love and grace of JESUS for the pardon of sin through his precious blood, deliverance from the curse of the law through his sufferings on the cross, justification in the sight of GOD in his spotless righteousness, and the hope of eternal life through his prevailing intercession; I say, can such poor sinners refrain speaking of the glory of such a precious Saviour, or be dumb to the praises of HIM? Impossible!

C. Why this is the very height of enthusiasm; the very rant of methodism!

M. Is it so? It is the most blessed enthusiasm, the most comfortable methodism in the world. I pray GOD fill my soul more and more with the joys of it. I am sure it was holy *Paul's* prayer for his converts “that ye may know THE “ LOVE OF CHRIST,” *Eph. iii. 19.* To my best friends I cannot wish a greater comfort; to my worst enemies I would not wish a lesser blessing.

C. Really, though I pity your delusion, yet I must own I am pleased with your openness and honesty; but do not flatter yourself with hopes of converting me to *methodism*. For if man is become so very vile, and CHRIST is alone to be trusted in for salvation, what becomes of good works? they are quite needless.

M. Not so; GOD forbid that we should ever think so. ‘All good works, our church tells us, Art. XII. proceed from ‘faith in JESUS, and are done in love to GOD.’ Therefore we hold forth the love of GOD in giving his Son to redeem and save us. We believe in the grace of JESUS in saving  
us;

us ; and the faith of this causes us to love GOD, and to glorify in our Saviour ; for “ we love him because he first “ loved us.” The belief of this inspires us with love to ALL his commands : from faith in JESUS and love to GOD we desire to abound in and be zealous of all good works. But without faith and love, what are all the works which men do ? They proceed not from christian principles ; they cannot be christian works ; they are not good works.

*C.* You really puzzle and perplex me with your nice distinctions.

*M.* My dear friend, the case with you and I, and too many more, is just like children who have been kept out at nurse so long, that they know not the voice of their own mother ; so we, not usually hearing the language that our church speaks in her articles, &c. know it not, we think it brings strange doctrines to our ears.

*C.* I do not know what to say to that, but I will consider these things more than I have done.

*M.* Do ; I pray GOD accompany it with his blessing. I will only leave upon your mind a very short and plain description of a true christian : ‘ He is one whom GOD is ‘ pleased to deliver from curse and damnation, and to bring ‘ by CHRIST to everlasting salvation—he is called according to GOD’s purpose by his SPIRIT working in due ‘ season—he through grace obeys the call—he is justified ‘ freely—he is made a Son of GOD by adoption—he is ‘ made like the image of JESUS CHRIST—he walks religiously in GOOD WORKS, and at length, by GOD’s ‘ mercy, he attains everlasting felicity.’

*C.* A description of a true christian do you call this ! I am sure it is the very strongest description of a rank Methodist that ever I met with.

*M.* Now, dear Sir, how you compliment the Methodists with the very essential truths of our church ? These very words you may read in the 17th article, from which I extracted them.

**B**

*C.* Psha !

C. Psha! you turn every thing to Methodism; I will hear no more.

M. Yes, I beg to leave this single word with you. Be assured of the truth of it, That those whom the world in general call *methodists*, are staunch members of the church of England, as by law established.

C. I do not believe it. I do not know what to make of you, nor of your odd notions.

M. Let me entreat you to read and study the plain sense of the 9th, 10th, and 11th articles of your own church, and if they do not fully and clearly justify what I have asserted, I promise you to retract it all.

C. I shall think about it. I wish you well.



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\* \* \* Shortly will be published, a second Dialogue between a Clergyman and one who is called a Methodist.

been a